

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
DALLAS DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

v.

ANTONIO SERNA (1),

Defendant.

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Case Number: 3:20-cr-001701-M

**ORDER SETTING INITIAL APPEARANCE AND GUILTY PLEA HEARING  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

In Special Order 13-9, this Court in its capacity as Chief Judge authorized—under authority granted by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), and based on findings of the Judicial Conference of the United States that emergency conditions will materially affect the functioning of the Court—the use of video teleconferencing for certain criminal proceedings, including initial appearances and guilty plea hearings. A video teleconference may only take place, however, with the consent of the defendant after consultation with counsel.

Here, the Court finds that the felony guilty plea hearing cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice. National, state, and local emergencies have been declared. Although the Court would prefer not to conduct felony guilty plea hearings via video teleconference, it finds that delaying the hearing would cause serious harm to the interests of justice. An indefinite delay of the felony guilty plea hearing could undermine the public's confidence in the judicial system, including the community, any victims, and the Defendant's family.

Given Special Order 13-9's authorization, the ongoing national emergency, and the need to protect all participants before the Court, the Court intends to set the defendant's initial

appearance and felony guilty plea hearing via video teleconference on **August 4, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.** before **Magistrate Judge Irma C. Ramirez**. The Court will determine on the record whether the defendant, after consultation with counsel, consents to proceeding via video teleconference. Once available, counsel and all participants will receive a link and instructions for joining the hearing.

**SO ORDERED.**

July 28, 2020.

  
BARBARA M. G. LYNN  
CHIEF JUDGE